

**ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW
#295**

**STANLEY GRUBER
USS *MARYLAND*, SURVIVOR**

**INTERVIEWED ON
DECEMBER 7, 1998
BY JEFF PAPPAS**

TRANSCRIBED BY:

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**USS *ARIZONA* MEMORIAL
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
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Jeff Pappas (JP): The following oral history interview is conducted by Jeff Pappas for the National Park Service, USS *Arizona* Memorial, at the Imperial Palace Hotel in Las Vegas, Nevada on December 7, 1998 at three p.m. The person being interviewed is Stanley Gruber, who was on the USS *Maryland*, on December 7, 1941. Stanley, for the record, would you please state your full name and your place and date of birth?

Stanley Gruber (SG): My name is Stanley Gruber. I was born in Butler, Wisconsin, right outside of Milwaukee and I enlisted in the navy in 1939. And I had my tonsils removed at Great Lakes and therefore I was late getting aboard ship and I went on in January of '40.

JP: Okay.

SG: Yeah, on the *Maryland*.

JP: Well, let's go back. Before we get to your navy career, let's go back to Wisconsin. Which—I don't think we got your birthday. What was your birthday?

SG: June 9, 1919.

JP: Okay.

SG: In five months, in six months, I'll be eighty.

JP: And you're still jitterbugging, you tell me.

SG: Oh yeah. Oh yeah.

JP: Excellent.

SG: Only thing is I get cramps! (Laughs)

JP: (Laughs) Did you learn how to jitterbug back home?

SG: Well, no. I learned most of it in the navy, before the war.

JP: I see. Now, of course the jitterbug craze was during the 1920's. You were a young man then, in the late 1920's.

SG: Well, I was twenty when I enlisted.

JP: Okay.

SG: I was twenty-two at the time of Pearl Harbor, because I was two years on the *Maryland* before Pearl Harbor.

JP: Well, tell me a little bit about Butler, Wisconsin.

SG: It's a railroad town.

JP: It's a railroad town.

SG: Yeah, and when the depression hit, there was nobody working. And I worked, as a young boy, I worked on a farm for fifty cents a day and took my own lunch and the guy says, "You got a half hour for lunch."

And my dad worked on the railroad and he had about forty-five years and he was out of a job. They're all out. The depression.

JP: Well, tell me about your father. Your full name of your father and mother.

SG: My father's name was Michael Gruber and he was a Serbian. And my mother was Serbian too; her name was Mildred. And they come over from Europe. And would you believe it that when I was in the service, and I got a twin brother that enlisted in the Marines on December 8, 1941.

JP: You have a twin brother?

SG: Yeah. And he enlisted in the Marines in December 8. And when we were in the service during the war, my mother was not a citizen. And she was very proud that when we were going in the war, she went to the county seat, Waukesha, to become a citizen. And the first thing the judge asked her, "You got any boys?"

She said, "I got two of 'em."

"And where are they?"

She said, "I don't know. One is in the Marines and one in the navy."

He never asked me anything.

JP: That was it. That was her ticket to citizenship, was your involvement in the navy...

SG: That's right.

JP: ...and your brother's in the Marines.

SG: That's right. The judge figured if she had two boys fighting for this country, she was a citizen. Yeah.

JP: Well it's a little bit different, we were...

SG: Yeah, and she was proud of that, you know.

JP: I bet she was. Let's go back to Butler. You went to school in Butler.

SG: Yeah.

JP: You went to your grammar schools and elementary...

SG: Yeah, and I went to high school too.

JP: Went to high school in Butler.

SG: Not in Butler. Butler didn't have a high school. We went to Menomonee Falls.

JP: Which falls?

SG: Menomonee Falls. That's where I live now. And that's where our national secretary, Julius Finnerin, he lives in Menomonee Falls.

JP: Very good. Well, tell me a little bit about high school. What were you interested in? Were you an athlete in high school?

SG: Well, I liked to play football. And I played golf during the depression. The only place you could make any money, you went to the golf course and you carried a golf club with you. And you got to be a very good golfer because that's all you did, is play golf.

JP: Now, how did you make money playing golf?

SG: Well, you go and look for golf balls or caddy. And at that time, when we caddied you got sixty cents for eighteen and thirty-five for nine. Okay. And then things were kind of rough, so if you made fifty cents, you didn't trust your pocket. You put it in your hand and took it home and you gave it to your mother. Then I joined the CCC's [*Civilian Conservation Corps*].

JP: Oh let's—well, we'll definitely talk about that. Let's stay in Butler right now. You're a young man and it's during the

depression. Well at least by 1929, you were ten years old at the time. And you had graduated, you had gone onto high school. And tell me a little bit more about high school though. Were you...

SG: Well, it was a small town high school, you know.

JP: Mm-hm.

SG: Not many students, just small town high school. And I liked to play football and I liked to play golf, and I partici—I was always athletic. And when I was aboard the *Maryland*, I competed in the whale boat races and I played football when I was on the *Maryland*, before the war.

JP: Mm-hm.

SG: And I did a little bit of wrestling. We had the light heavyweight champ of the fleet. It was a fellow by the name of Joe Skook. And we'd work out, you know. And I was not really a wrestler, but I was athletically inclined.

JP: The name of the wrestler, the boxer you were speaking of, the wrestler?

SG: Wrestler, Joe Skook.

JP: Skook, can you spell his last name?

SG: He was light heavyweight champ of the fleet.

JP: Do you remember how to spell his last name?

SG: S-K-O-O-K, I think.

JP: Okay. So when did you first think about going into military service?

SG: Pardon me?

JP: You said—when did you first think about going into the military?

SG: Nineteen thirty-nine.

JP: Okay, so before that though, you served in the CCC's.

SG: Yes.

JP: Tell me about that.

SG: Well, I enlisted; I was only in for six months.

JP: All right.

SG: And you got five dollars a month and twenty-five went home. This is depression, you know.

JP: Right.

SG: About 1937 or '36. I don't remember the years. And they'd send twenty-five dollars home. And one year—we being Serbian, we celebrate Christmas on January 7, we're orthodox, just like the Greek, orthodox.

JP: Right, right.

SG: So I get home and there's no money in the house. I give my money the five dollars that I got and you could buy quite a bit of groceries then for five dollars.

JP: Mm-hm.

SG: And she went up and bought groceries to celebrate Serbian Christmas.

JP: Okay.

SG: See, that's how rough things were.

JP: So when did you hear about the CCC's? Did you talk to someone about the CCC's? How did you get to know the CCC's?

SG: Well, they had the CCC's and NY, National Youth Association, all these things. Roosevelt got elected president and he was trying to get the country going.

JP: Right.

SG: So a guy never had a regular job any more and you know. So you went anywhere where you could pick up a buck or two.

JP: Sure.

SG: So I went in the CCC's, you know.

JP: Where did you serve?

SG: In Milwaukee. On the Milwaukee River, we dynamite deep in the Milwaukee River, in the city of Milwaukee. But you know, they went all over the state, you know, the CCC's. They planted trees and built dams and all that kind of—but we were deepening the Milwaukee River, right there in Milwaukee.

JP: So that's what you did, then?

SG: That's where I was in, in the CCC's. I was only in for six months.

JP: Yeah. So what did you do afterwards?

SG: Well, I don't know. You didn't have a steady job. You went to the golf course if you could to make some money. I mean things were really rough, you know.

JP: Sure.

SG: And my family was on—they didn't call it welfare—relief. Because everybody was out of work. You couldn't buy a job.

JP: So at this time, though, are you thinking about joining up, joining the navy?

SG: Yeah, because I got no money. I can't afford an automobile and you want to have a girlfriend, take her out, but you can't afford it.

JP: Yeah.

SG: So the only out then is go in the service. Not that you were going to make a lot of money, but at least you get three square meals a day and a place to stay, a clean place to stay and three square meals. You join the navy.

JP: Why the navy? Why not the army or the Marine Corps?

SG: Well, no, I liked the—well, I don't know. I didn't have anything against the army, but I just thought I'd like to go in the navy. That's all.

JP: That's it. Okay.

SG: Yeah.

JP: So tell me about that. You enlisted. Where did you enlist?

SG: I enlisted in Milwaukee.

JP: Okay.

SG: And I went to Great Lakes and I gotta tell you, I don't know. We're riding the north shore train, there's a north shore train like a suburban train from Milwaukee to Great Lakes, and then you pass your examination in Milwaukee, but you weren't in until you passed it in Chicago. Chicago is ninety miles south.

JP: Mm-hm.

SG: And I got to urinate real bad.

JP: What, now?

SG: Huh?

JP: Okay.

SG: And I get up to that post office and the guy wants me to go in the bottle. And I can't make a drop. He goes over there and he opens up the spigot.

JP: This is in Chicago?

SG: "Put your hand under there."

JP: Yeah.

SG: Then you run over. (Laughs)

JP: Then you run over!

SG: Then I passed there. And now they take you back on that same train to Great Lakes.

JP: Uh-huh.

SG: And these guys that didn't make it, bad shape. They're going back up to Escanaba, Michigan.

JP: Didn't make the physical, you mean?

SG: Yeah.

JP: Yeah.

SG: And they're going back up to—we get dropped off at Great Lakes. When we get dropped off at Great Lakes, these guys are there already. They've only been there a short time, but now we're the latest recruit, you know.

JP: Yeah.

SG: And they're giving us the business! (Chuckles) So we went through training. I forget how many weeks. They march you every day and you went through training. Yeah. And we were Company 34 and we were the rooster company.

JP: A rooster company?

SG: Yeah, you know what the rooster company is?

JP: I do not know. Fill me in.

SG: If you were the best company at that time, you would get to pick any ship you wanted. They posted the ships in the navy.

JP: How did you—was this a competition at recruit training?

SG: Well, yeah. In recruit training, you had to march inside. There was an armory. And also outside and if you were the sharpest company, you would get first choice on pick. We didn't know one ship from another, so we said, "Eeny, meeny, miney, mo," pick out the USS *Maryland*, battleship.

JP: So your company made the rooster list?

SG: Yeah.

JP: Excellent. So you picked the *Maryland*.

SG: Yeah.

JP: Tell me about that. Tell me about going to the *Maryland*. Where was the *Maryland* at this time?

SG: In Long Beach, California.

JP: So you took a train.

SG: And we took the train to Long Beach. And we had our tonsils taken out first in Great Lakes, so we were delayed. Tonsils, they take your tonsils out.

JP: Let's talk about that.

SG: They line you up, like this here, okay.

JP: Okay.

SG: And the guy says—he's got a wire—and he says, "Open up your mouth," and with that wire, he cuts off them tonsils and he says, "Pant like a dog."

And he's all full of blood. And he jerks out the tonsils and then you can't swallow. And they give you cold ice cream. And that's hard to swallow. And then you stayed there for maybe a week or so, 'til them tonsils healed

Then when we went back to Long Beach, California, and when we got to Long Beach, they had the aircraft carriers right up to the dock, in Long Beach, San Pedro. Man, when I seen them ships, I never seen a ship like that, that big. And then one kid from Iowa said, "Boy, you can sure get a lot of hay here!" (Laughs)

JP: So, let's go back to the tonsils. They took out everyone's tonsils then?

SG: Yeah.

JP: This was done where now?

SG: Pardon me?

JP: This was done in Great Lakes?

SG: Yeah.

JP: And then...

SG: And you know, that was a good thing.

JP: Why?

SG: Well, I'll tell you why. Prior to going into the navy, I always wound up having a sore throat, or a cough, you know. When they removed them tonsils out, I very seldom had a sore throat or a cough. They removed them tonsils out. That was a good thing.

JP: All right. So now you're at Long Beach.

SG: Mm-hm.

JP: And you're looking at this armada of ours.

SG: Yeah, this big ship.

JP: Sure.

SG: I never seen any big ship like that in my life, and I live right up near Lake Michigan, you know.

JP: Yeah.

SG: But I never, I didn't go. Lake Michigan is about fifteen miles east of where I live, but I never went out on Lake Michigan. And man alive, when you get aboard that ship, you're the latest recruit, okay.

JP: Yeah.

SG: Now when you're the latest recruit and you come up on the topside, like where them guns were, and early in the morning, you were supposed to scrub down the decks. And you walk there and everything is done by time, clockwork. And they would really make it miserable for you.

JP: Yeah.

SG: Because, you know, you're the last guy on the ship. I was not. There was another guy that joined the navy with me. His name was Samuel Potter and it got so miserable that this Potter and I were going to go over leave.

JP: When? What were some of the specific things they'd do to you?

SG: What?

JP: What was some of the things they'd do to you?

SG: Well, they'd make life miserable. If you'd walk up on the topside, they'd put the salt-water hose on you. And you know, they want you to know that you're the recruit, you're the last guy on the ship. And that was common thing, you know. And it got kind of rough and this buddy of mine that joined the navy with me, he says, "To hell with it. Let's leave here."

I says, "God almighty, I'd be ashamed," you know.

JP: What, go AWOL?

SG: Yeah! Leave the navy! Yeah! So I said, "Sam," this guy—I went to school with him—I said, "Sam, when we get through swabbing the deck in the morning and we stand underneath the umbrella of the stack that got air, when these guys are standing around the stack before they [*call for*] chow, we're going to tell 'em, 'Okay, you bastards, two at a time. Step out here and we're going to take you on.'" We did that. After that it was real nice. No problem.
(Chuckles)

JP: (Chuckles) So you passed the test.

SG: Pardon me?

JP: You passed the test.

SG: Yeah! Yeah!

JP: Well how much time did you spend in Long Beach? You remember?

SG: Well, you know, we'd go out to sea, training, the battleships. Have you ever been to Long Beach?

JP: I have not.

SG: Well, there's a—the battleship would be out about a mile or so away from the shore because they anchor out there and they'd swing on the anchor. And we would go out to sea around Santa Catalina Island and that, and we'd have exercises. And then we'd go up to San Francisco and sometimes we went up to Seattle, Washington. They got a dry dock that's where we came, after the attack on Pearl Harbor, up in Seattle, Washington.

JP: Is that in Bremerton, or...?

SG: Yeah. Bremerton, that's the dry dock.

JP: Mm-hm. Okay.

SG: And I think it was in April of '40 that the fleet went to Hawaii? I believe so.

JP: Mm-hm.

SG: And well, we were there until we got attacked at Pearl Harbor.

JP: So you were on the *Maryland* at this time?

SG: Yeah.

JP: So what were you doing? What was your duties?

SG: Oh, a plain, ordinary deckhand.

JP: Mm-hm.

SG: And then finally I decided I wanted to work on the guns, because we were firing on the guns. Practice firing on the five-inch.

JP: Are those the anti-aircraft guns?

SG: Yeah. Yeah, that's the biggest. Well, that's the biggest anti-aircraft gun. We had five-inch, we had 1.1, that's like a machine gun. We had fifty and thirty caliber machine guns. But the five-inch twenty-fives was the main battery on the—and then we had a five-inch fifty-one, but they were broadside guns. They couldn't fire 'em at Pearl Harbor. If you're out to sea, you could fire 'em, but not in Pearl, because they couldn't elevate 'em, you know.

JP: Right.

SG: Yeah.

JP: Okay, so you're on the *Maryland*. You're heading toward Pearl now.

SG: Pardon me?

JP: You're heading toward Pearl Harbor.

SG: Yeah.

JP: You got to, you know, leave Long Beach with part of the Pacific fleet that's heading toward Pearl Harbor.

SG: Yeah, went to Pearl Harbor.

JP: Okay. Tell me about that. Tell me about seeing Hawaii or visiting Hawaii.

SG: Well, when we got to Pearl Harbor, we'd go out to sea for four or five days and we'd have maneuvers and we'd practice firing and sometimes we'd go into Lahaina Roads—that's in Maui. They call it Lahaina Roads. And the other times we'd come into Pearl Harbor, and at that time, you couldn't go around Ford Island because it wasn't dredged out enough, so when you'd come in there, they'd get tugs and they'd wind it, what they call wind the ship. They'd wind you up and then they'd push you up against where we were when we got attacked there. But before the attack at Pearl Harbor, they had dredged it out, where you didn't have to wind the ship. You could go right around and come out, you know, on the other side, like where the battleship *Utah* and the *Raleigh* and them were on the other side of Ford Island. That was dredged out so you could go around, see.

JP: What did you think of Hawaii? What was your first impression?

SG: Well, I loved Hawaii. It was beautiful. And I loved it, but then I got sick and tired. If I said it once, I said it a million times, I just hated to hear that, "KGU, Honolulu, Hawaii," yak, yak, yak, yak, yak, yak. That's all you hear.

And then there wasn't that much to do down in Hawaii. After you've been there for a while and you went and seen different things, there wasn't that much to do. You know.

JP: Well, it was—did you like the beach? Like going to the beach?

SG: Yeah. We'd go to the beach, swimming, and, well, I mean, when you're away from home, you know, it was just something to go to. You know, there wasn't much.

JP: Yeah.

SG: Yeah.

JP: Well then let's get right to the attack, that morning, Sunday morning.

SG: Well, that morning, I could've gone to shore that morning, but I was getting sick and tired of going ashore and I didn't intend to go ashore. And that morning, I'm sitting in this cubbyhole that I told you about in there, where we had admiral's inspection the day before.

JP: Tell me about the admiral inspection. Now, this is on December 6?

SG: We had Admiral Walter Anderson. He was in charge of a number of battleships. And he was on our ship and we had admiral's inspection on a Saturday morning. And I removed the firing locks. Well, we removed the firing locks on all the five-inch—there's eight of 'em—up on...

JP: Was that standard procedure when an admiral would inspect?

SG: Yeah, because you gotta drop the breach of the gun and he'd look through. And you didn't want that firing lock in there. So I put 'em in this wooden box and I hid 'em while we're sitting there waiting for the coffee to brew, in the back here, that's like a little workshop, you know, up on the topside. And I put 'em in there and we had that inspection.

That morning—you know I had no idea where Chippewa Falls was and that's only about 180, 200 miles from where I live. But I never got up to Chippewa Falls. And the reason I mention this, this gunner's mate was sitting in there with me. He was from Chippewa Falls, Wisconsin. And I didn't know where Chippewa Falls was, but we were having a pot

of coffee brewed and we're reading the Honolulu paper, morning paper. And I said to him, "Gee, it seems like there's an awful lot of planes flying around," because it was Sunday, you know.

JP: Hmm.

SG: And he said, "Well, they're holding bombing practice."

So I took my paper and I stepped out of this shop and I didn't pay any attention to the plane (clears throat)—excuse me. That bomb hit the ramp where these PBY, navy PBY's come in on Ford Island. When I looked up, I seen the red ball on the wings. I wouldn't even known it was Japanese.

JP: So this was the day after the admiral inspection though.

SG: Yeah, Sunday. It was Sunday.

JP: So the admiral had done the inspection of the *Maryland* on Saturday.

SG: The admiral's over on the beach.

JP: He's on the beach. And now this is during the attack now.

SG: Yeah.

JP: Okay. Continue.

SG: So when I seen those Japanese, I hightailed it down the mid-ship ladder. Our living compartment is—sixth division was on the main deck, mid-ship. I ran down the mid-ship ladder to notify the people down [*there*], my shipmates who are—the sixth division was the anti-aircraft division—that the Japs are bombing us. And I told a fellow by the name of

Anderson, Bill Anderson from Waterloo, Iowa. I said, "Andy, sound battle stations. [*The*] Japs are bombing us."

And he started to giggle, to laugh. And I wasn't wasting time with him. I says, "Bill," I says, "the Japs are bombing us."

And I ran back up that mid-ship ladder. I wanted to get that gunlocks. And I ran up on there and I found this box, which had firing locks in it. You couldn't fire them guns without these firing locks. And there was a big lock on it. (Coughs)

JP: So after the inspection, after the inspection on December 6, you didn't put the firing locks back into the anti-aircraft guns.

SG: No. No. They're still back in this cubbyhole. Yeah. I got back up there and I found that box. We had these big crowbars and I took it and I smashed that box. And I put that number three—we stenciled one, three, one, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight. And I was a gun captain on gun three. And I put that thing in my fingers like this. It's about that long, and about that big around. You hook up electrical lead and you can't fire the guns without it. And I stepped out of this cubbyhole to go to my gun. It's only about fifteen, twenty feet away, gun three. Gun one was right there. And this plane was coming over...

JP: So the firing locks—the firing lock area is actually separate from the anti-aircraft guns, though. That's a separate unit?

SG: No. Well, it's a part of the anti-aircraft gun, the firing lock.

JP: Okay.

SG: You can't fire the gun without the firing lock.

JP: Okay.

SG: I stepped out of this cubbyhole and I felt a sharp pain in my chest. They were machine-gunning, and these guns are open at that time. They, later [*enclosed them*]

JP: Now, who's machine-gunning at this time? The Japanese are machine gunning.

SG: The Japanese planes coming in over Ford Island real low and they're strafing with the machine guns. And all of a sudden I felt a sharp pain in my chest and I thought he hit me. And I stepped back, and I stood there like this to see if blood was going to come out because of the sharp pain. It was [*the*] paint chipings that was off the bulkhead, steel bulkhead. And I went out again, the same thing. Now I get madder than hell and I'm going to run for the gun. And if another one would've been out, I wouldn't be sitting here. And I get over to the gun and I hook up the gun, the firing lock. And I depressed the gun because they're coming low over Ford Island, and the guy sitting on the pointer's seat, I couldn't remember his name until I went to a reunion twenty years ago in Kansas City, Missouri. He says to me, "My ears, my ears!"

And I says to him, "The hell with your ears, this is your ass!"

And I'm loading the gun. I wasn't supposed to be the loader, but I figure I could do a better the job than the guy that should've and I'm loading the gun. All of a sudden, this guy is missing and he's the pointer. The pointer is the guy that points the gun up and down and the trainer moves it right and left. And they had a firing lock on the pointer and he's gone, and I could kick it with my pedal and fire it.

Well, he left and I didn't know where the hell happened to him and I'd loaded the gun and I kicked it out, and the gun is

depressed. He came back and it looked like he had a bale of cotton in his ears and he says, "My ears, my ears!"

I says, "To hell with your ears," you know.

And I never could remember who this guy was. So I go to a reunion twenty years ago in Kansas City, Missouri. My wife and I come down an elevator and there's a bunch of sailors standing in the lobby. This guy walks up to me and I got Stanley Gruber, Menomonee Falls, Wisconsin, 6B Division. This guy looks and he says, "You were in the 6B?"

I says, "Yeah."

He says, "So was I."

When he said that, I said, "What the hell were you doing on December 7?"

He said, "I was a pointer on gun three."

I says, "God damn you!" I says, "You ran off of that gun and I had to kick 'em off!"

And he says, "I couldn't stand it!" And he ripped up his t-shirt and stuck it in his ears.

And you know what that guy was doing for a living?

JP: No.

SG: He was guarding Jimmy Hoffa in Pennsylvania in a federal prison! (Laughs) That's a fact! He got a job, a service credit and he got a job in a prison in Pennsylvania and he was guarding Jimmy Hoffa! (Laughs)

And then we have these—on these five-inch guns, we have what they set fuses on these shells. Well I knew that if we didn't set them fuses right, that projectile goes out there and it doesn't do anything. So I got a dog wrench and I smashed that stop so that the shell exploded as soon as it got out the end of the barrel, like a shotgun. So it's firing shrapnel, see. And we were firing and we had them—and you know, ordinarily when you practice, there's a guy with big asbestos gloves that catches them empty shells or brass. Well, that bulkhead was there. We're just firing like hell and the shells are hitting the bulkhead and they're piled up like this here, during the firing. And we're on the starboard side.

And when we were down in the islands, they'd take us over on the island and they'd train us about gas, gas attack. Everybody had a gas mask. And if you see the wet deck, you had a gas attack.

So I see a wet deck and I peel a gas mask on. This little old ensign, he comes up to me and he's hollering in my ear, but my eardrums are perforated, right away. And the blood is running outside of my head because the concussion ruined my eardrums, and the blood is running down. And he's hollering to me and I can't hardly hear 'em. And he said, "What's with the gas mask?"

And I pointed at the deck. And he grabbed me by the shoulder like this, and he pulled me over to the side of the superstructure. When the [*Oklahoma*] rolled over, the water went over on the starboard side. I don't know the [*Oklahoma*] is down!

JP: So the water on the deck was caused by the [*Oklahoma*]?

SG: Yeah. The water, when the [*Oklahoma*] rolled over, that water come over. And I didn't know the [*Oklahoma*] was rolled over until he pulled me over on the side and showed

me the [*Oklahoma*]. She rolled over, she took about a half a dozen fish. And she went right over. And the *West Virginia* astern of her, she got hit with torpedoes. And the *Tennessee* was directly astern of us, she was lucky like we were. We got hit with two 1750-pound bombs.

JP: Mm-hm.

SG: Later on, after the war, I picked up a book written by Fuchida. Fuchida led the attack on Pearl Harbor and he mentioned that he was—he's a high altitude, in the second raid. Not the first raid, the second raid. And he writes in there how he wants to get, bomb the *Maryland* and the *Tennessee*, but there's so much smoke from the *Arizona* and *West Virginia*—which there was, you know. But they hit us with two 1750-pound bombs and they wrecked everything up in the fo'c'sles, see. Well, we were lucky. I think we had only had about five people killed on that ship. *Tennessee* the same way because we were protected by these ships outboard of us, see.

JP: Mm-hm.

SG: And it was like a nightmare. And I'm standing on the deck with them high-altitude, after the initial raid, the second one. And I was looking up. There's no way in the world you're going to reach these guys. They're up too high. And you stand there, and I'm wearing phones. You're supposed to get instructions from the directors. You didn't need any instructions from the directors. These guys are here, you could see 'em. You don't have to wait for them to match up these pointers.

And I'm looking up at that and I'm thinking to myself, if that bastard drops that bomb, I'll never know what hit me! You're standing on the boat deck, you know, and they're up too high and you can't shoot at 'em because there's no way

you're going to reach 'em. They're too high! These are the high—that's the second raid, you know.

JP: Yeah.

SG: And then, I can tell you, there was a lull on our starboard side and this guy that went to navy with me, he was over on gun four, on the port side. And I wanted to go and see if he was still alive. And I went over there to see, just for a minute or two, and this plane coming running parallel to the ship and the god damn Japs, if you would've had a rock or potato, you could hit 'em. And he waved his fist like this. And he's got that cap like a bird. And this guy must have either dropped his bomb or torpedo and he's going parallel to the ship, in Pearl Harbor, right alongside of our ship! Yeah.

And then we sunk a midget submarine inside the harbor and there's one guy that's our national secretary. He lives in Menomonee Falls. His name is Finnerin. He was on the destroyer *Monaghan* and she had steam up and she went right over that sub, midget sub and then she dropped depth charges on it, sunk it. That's it.

JP: No, no, no. Continue.

SG: And so that night, we expected that the Japs were going to come back, see. And then, you never heard so many rumors in all your life—that they landed on the beach.

JP: Yeah, tell me about some of the rumors.

SG: Well, the biggest rumor was that the Japanese landed on the island. Now we're jammed up against Ford Island and the *Oklahoma* is down, so we can't get out of there, no way. You can walk off of Ford Island and come aboard my ship, okay. So they broke open the armory, on the ship, where they got

the rifles and shotguns. I picked up a World War I army rifle with a whole bandolier of ammunition. And I'm standing watch on the five-inch gun with a rifle, thirty-oh-six rifle. One day this officer says to me, about the second day, he says, "Gruber," he says, "what's with the gun?"

I says, "Sir, I hear that the son of a bitches landed on the island."

And this guy couldn't be any stricter, but if they'd come aboard ship if they'd and if they did, I'm going to get as many of them bastards as I can before they get me! Because you figure you're not going to make it anyway, you know.

And because if they come, they got machine guns and rifles in there and you're going to just have to go there and keep shooting at 'em until they get you, that's all.

JP: Right.

SG: Well, those are all rumors, you know. We find that out later. So now we can't get away from where we're jammed there because the *Oklahoma* is down and we're—these concrete pilings. So they gotta blow up these concrete pilings so we can get out of there and they take us over to the navy yard. When we get over to the navy yard, there's rumors that the Japs on the island are putting bombs on the ship! So if you weren't standing watch on the ship, they had a shack over in the navy yard and whenever I hear that song, "Chattanooga Choo-Choo," we wore the record out. You suck coffee and sit it out, unless you had a watch. You played that "Chattanooga Choo-Choo" all night long, because you figured they're going to put bombs aboard the ship.

Then we had Marines posted aboard ship. And they stick a bayonet in you when you come in at night, because they

didn't know who you were, you know. Everybody was nervous as a cat, you know.

JP: Mm-hm.

SG: And all kinds of rumors, you know. It's terrible.

JP: Well...well, is there any more that you'd like to add? If not, I'd like to end the interview here.

SG: Well, I went aboard an aircraft carrier later on.

JP: Okay. Well, why don't we stop there and we'll get another tape. And we'll talk about that.

SG: All right.

END OF INTERVIEW